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AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AN
AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT REPORT OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AN AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT*

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* The present document is issued in three parts. The report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group will be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 45 (A/51/45).

** Contained in A/AC.250/1 (Part II).

*** Contained in A/AC.250/1 (Part III).



I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its resolution 49/126 of 19 December 1994, the General Assembly decided to establish an open-ended ad hoc working group of the Assembly in early 1995 to elaborate further an agenda for development under the chairmanship of its President. In its decision 49/497 of 14 September 1995, the Assembly decided that the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group should continue its work during the fiftieth session of the Assembly with a view to finalizing an agenda for development and to report thereon during the fiftieth session of the Assembly.
2. In its decision 50/490 of 16 September 1996, the Assembly decided that the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group should continue its work during the fifty-first session of the Assembly with a view to concluding its work as soon as possible, taking into account the progress achieved during the forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions of the Assembly, and to report thereon at its fifty-first session.
3. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group held six sessions during the fifty-first session of the Assembly. The first session was held from 11 to 21 February 1997, the second from 31 March to 4 April 1997, the third from 28 to 30 April 1997, the fourth from 2 to 6 June 1997, the fifth on 13 June 1997 and the sixth on __ June 1997.
4. The Presidents of the forty-ninth, fiftieth and fifty-first sessions of the General Assembly, Mr. Amara Essy (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral (Portugal) and Mr. Razali Ismail (Malaysia), respectively, served as Chairman of the Working Group.
5. At the first meeting of the Working Group on 21 February 1995, Mr. René Valéry Mongbé (Benin) and Mr. Peter Osvald (Sweden) were designated as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group.
6. At the first organizational meeting of the Working Group during the fifty-first session, held on 11 February 1997, Mr. Peter Osvald (Sweden) was reconfirmed as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Percy Mangoaela (Lesotho) was designated Vice-Chairman of the Working Group, succeeding Mr. Mongbé (Benin). At the first meeting of the Working Group during the fifty-first session, Mr. Michael Powles (New Zealand) was designated Vice-Chairman of the Working Group, succeeding Mr. Osvald (Sweden).

II. RECOMMENDATION

7. At its ___ meeting, on 20 June 1997, the Working Group decided to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 49/126 of 19 December 1994, in which it decided to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group of the Assembly to elaborate further an action-oriented, comprehensive agenda for development, which should begin its work as early as possible in 1995 under the chairmanship of the President of the Assembly,

"1. Takes note of the report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development;¹

"2. Adopts the Agenda for Development, as set forth in the annex to the present resolution."

¹ To be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 45 (A/51/45).

Annex

AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT

1. • Development is one of the main priorities of the United Nations. Development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.

• Sustained economic growth is essential to the economic and social development of all countries, in particular developing countries. Through such growth, which should be broadly based so as to benefit all people, countries will be able to improve the standards of living of their people through the eradication of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy, the provision of adequate shelter and secure employment for all, and the preservation of the integrity of the environment.

• Democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society, and effective participation by civil society are also an essential part of the necessary foundations for the realization of social and people centred sustainable development.

• The empowerment of women and their full participation on a basis of equality in all spheres of society is fundamental for development.

2. Building on the outcome of recent United Nations conferences and other relevant agreements, the Agenda for Development aims at invigorating a renewed and strengthened partnership for development, based on the imperatives of mutual benefits and genuine interdependence. It testifies to the renewed commitments of all countries to mobilize national and international efforts in pursuit of sustainable development and to revitalize and strengthen international cooperation for development. In that context, the Agenda for Development acknowledges the primacy of national policy and measures in the development process and calls for action towards a dynamic and enabling international economic environment, including, inter alia, an open, rule based, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, transparent, and predictable multilateral trading system and promotion of investment and transfer of technology and knowledge, as well as for an enhanced international cooperation in the mobilization and provision of financial resources for development from all sources, the strategy for durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries and the efficient use of available resources.

I. SETTING AND OBJECTIVES

A. Setting

1. Development, peace and security

3. Peace and development are closely interrelated and mutually supportive. Development should also be pursued in its own right. Development is indispensable to the achievement and maintenance of peace and security both within and among nations. Without development there can be neither peace nor security. There is complementarity between the processes related to the Agenda

for Development and the Agenda for Peace. For peace and stability to endure, national action and effective international cooperation are required to promote a better life for all in larger freedom, a critical element of which is the eradication of poverty.

4. Development cannot be attained in the absence of peace and security or in the absence of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Under conditions of war, and during periods of short-term emergencies and humanitarian needs, development efforts are often neglected, diminished or abandoned. Excessive military expenditures, arms trade, investment for arms production, acquisition and stockpiling have a negative impact on development prospects. With the relaxation of international tensions the opportunity exists for reducing, as appropriate, military expenditures and investments for arms production and acquisition, consistent with national security requirements, in order to increase resources for social and economic development.

(a) Globalization, regional cooperation and interdependence: the need for a commitment for partnership

5. Profound changes have occurred, especially coupled with the end of the cold war, which question some of the traditional ways of addressing the challenge of development.

6. One such increasingly important change affecting all countries is the process of market-driven globalization, including due to rapid progress in information exchange and telecommunications. Globalization encompasses the varying degrees of increasing integration of world markets of goods, services, capital, technology, and labour. This has generated greater openness, freer movement of factors of production and created greater opportunities for international cooperation. Greatly increased trade and capital flows and technological developments open new opportunities for growth of the world economy, particularly in developing countries. Wider dissemination of ideas, cultures, and lifestyles brought about by innovations in transportation and communications are also important manifestations of the globalization process. Globalization permits countries to share experiences and to learn from one another's achievements and difficulties, and promote a cross-fertilization of ideals, cultural values and aspirations, taking into account the recognition of cultural diversity.

7. Globalization of the world economy presents opportunities and challenges for the development process as well as risks and uncertainties. As a result of the process of globalization and growing interdependence in the economic, social and environmental fields, an increasing number of issues cannot be effectively addressed by countries individually. Therefore, international cooperation is required. Furthermore, non-State actors with a global reach, such as transnational corporations, private financial institutions and non-governmental organizations, have important roles to play in the emerging network of international cooperation.

8. Greater interdependence among States has accelerated the international transmission of macroeconomic policy decisions and therefore their effects throughout the global economy. This is particularly true for the development prospects of the developing countries, which have been particularly affected by globalization.

9. Global financial integration presents new challenges and opportunities for the international community. Sound domestic macroeconomic policies of each

country in regard to promoting macroeconomic stability and growth are primary elements for determining private capital flows, and the coordination of macroeconomic policies, where appropriate, and a favourable international economic environment play an important role in reinforcing their effectiveness. The globalization of financial markets can generate new risks of instability, including interest rate and exchange rate fluctuations and volatile short-term capital flows, which require all countries to pursue sound economic policies and to recognize the external economic impact of their domestic policies. There is a need for the expansion of private capital flows and for broader access by all developing countries to these flows, and therefore the need for the international community to assist low-income countries, especially those in Africa, in their efforts to create an enabling environment necessary to attract such flows.

10. Increasing the capacity to respond to these trends requires sound domestic policies as well as a favourable international economic environment. Although new growth poles are emerging in a number of developing countries which will provide an increasing share of the stimulus to world development, it is likely that the role of the developed countries in world finance will remain preponderant for a long time. The policies they follow in their domestic affairs will, in the increasingly globalized capital markets, be of decisive importance for the rest of the world as they have a significant influence on world economic growth and, consequently, over the international economic environment.

11. Notwithstanding the importance of a favourable international economic environment, ultimately each country bears primary responsibility for its own economic and social policies for development. In order to take advantage of a rapidly integrating world economy, all countries should adopt sound and stable domestic policies, address external and internal imbalances, and encourage a continuous process of adjustment. Sound national policies are also essential for cushioning external shocks. National policies of all countries would also benefit from improved political institutions and legal systems. In this context, the international community should give strong support to the efforts of developing countries to solve their serious social and economic problems and should promote a favourable international economic environment for development.

12. Globalization and interdependence are deepening the need and creating greater opportunities for international cooperation. The problems and questions which globalization and interdependence bring in their wake, show that there clearly exists a shared, common interest among all countries in solving and answering them. International development cooperation, not only founded in solidarity, but also based on mutual interest and partnership, forms an essential part of this effort. With the waning of ideological confrontations, the rise in globalization, and the deepening of interdependence among nations, the historic opportunity has arisen for constructive dialogue among all countries, in particular among the developed and developing countries, and political mobilization for the promotion of international cooperation for development based on genuine partnership and mutuality of interests and benefits. This Agenda for Development manifests our commitment to grasp this opportunity.

13. The deepening interdependence among countries has already led to the emergence and strengthening of regional economic groupings and arrangements. They are recognized as important catalysts for global economic growth and expansion of trade. They offer a framework for fostering and enhancing cooperation among States not only on economic policy but on other areas of

common concern as well. Regional economic groupings and arrangements which are outward oriented, supportive of and complementary to the multilateral trading system are important actors in the global development process.

(b) Variety of development experiences and impact of globalization

14. Development experiences among countries reflect differences with both progress and setbacks. A number of developing countries have experienced rapid economic growth over the recent past and have become dynamic partners in the international economy. These countries, which maintain a high rate of economic growth, have increased their share in world trade and foreign direct investment, thereby expanding their role in the global economy.

15. At the same time, developing countries continue to face difficulties participating in the globalization process. Many risk being marginalized and effectively excluded from the globalization process. Many of them continue to be mired in poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and economic stagnation, including slow or negative economic growth. The global changes in finance, communications and technology have largely by-passed them, despite their efforts of undertaking economic reforms, including structural adjustment programmes. The gap between the developed and developing countries remains unacceptably wide. Imbalances and uncertainties continue to exist in the global economy which affect all countries but in particular the interests of the developing countries. We reiterate the need for broadening and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the international economic decision-making process.

16. The development spectrum ranges widely not only among countries but also within countries. The varied country situations indicate that in addition to overall measures needed for the promotion of a favourable international economic environment for development, there is a need for specific measures in particular country situations. Success will often depend on the removal of key constraints which vary greatly from country to country. Cooperation among developing countries and sharing their experiences can greatly contribute to achieving such success. It also requires that international development cooperation has to take into account the respective plans, programmes, needs, priorities and policies of developing countries. A new international partnership is required for development at the national, subregional, regional and international levels.

(c) Critical situations and special problems in developing countries:

- Critical situation in Africa
- Critical situation in the least developed countries
- Special problems in small island developing States
- Special problems in land-locked developing countries

17. The critical socio-economic situation in Africa is of priority concern. Africa is the only region where poverty is expected to continue to increase substantially. Much of the continent suffers from, inter alia, inadequate physical and institutional infrastructure, poor human resource development, lack of food security, malnutrition, hunger, widespread epidemics and diseases, and unemployment and underemployment. These conditions are further compounded by a number of conflict and disaster situations. All these diverse limitations and constraints make it difficult for Africa to fully benefit from the processes of

globalization and liberalization of trade and to integrate fully in the world economy. Increased mobilization of domestic and external resources for development, as well as their more effective use, are critical for the success of the economic and political reforms undertaken by African countries. International solidarity is fundamental to Africa's development and international cooperation and support must necessarily complement the national resources mobilized by the African countries themselves.

18. The critical situations of the least developed countries, which are particularly marginalized from the world economy, require the priority attention of the entire international community, in support of appropriate domestic economic and social policies. The heavy burden of debt and debt service on their economies, deterioration in the terms of trade, decline in real terms in recent years in the overall level of official development assistance (ODA) and limited flows of private resources are some of the main factors that impede the already limited opportunities for these countries to participate in and benefit from the process of globalization and liberalization. By most measures of economic and human well-being, the least developed countries lag seriously behind. Their social indicators are consistently low and have worsened in some cases. Their institutional and physical infrastructure is fragile and therefore enhanced national and international support are required to strengthen them.

19. The special problems of small island developing States also need to be given priority attention by the international community. The special challenges and constraints to their development arising from, inter alia, their limited market size and resource base, from their particular transportation and communication problems, and from their high degree of vulnerability to natural and environmental disaster need to be addressed.

20. Lack of territorial access to the sea, aggravated by remoteness and isolation from world markets, prohibitive transit costs and risks impose serious constraints on the overall socio-economic development efforts of the landlocked developing countries. The special challenges and constraints specific to these countries need to be addressed.

(d) Post-cold war realities and challenges

(i) Special problems and features of countries with economies in transition

21. The special problems and features of countries with economies in transition require particular attention in the post-cold war era. The dual transition to democracy and to a market economy makes their situation especially complex particularly regarding their economic growth and sustainable development. This ongoing process is guided by and based on the respect for human rights, transparent, representative and accountable governance, the rule of law and civil peace.

22. Considerable strains are put on the social fabric of these societies of the countries with economies in transition. Structural adjustments bring economic benefits but are causing social problems which were unknown before the transition. Severe environmental degradation, a worsening population situation and the problem of conversion of military production to civilian in these countries are of primary concern.

23. The completion of the transition process and the integration of these countries in the world economy and their effective involvement in the

multilateral institutions will have a positive impact not only on these countries themselves but also on the global economy. Thus, it is especially important for them to promote effective cooperation in trade, economy, finance, science and technology with all countries and regions. Their integration should contribute to economic cooperation with developing countries and to mutually beneficial exchanges of scientific and industrial know-how. Increased cooperation among countries with economies in transition will also be important. In order to bring this integration about in a speedy manner, effective international support for reforms in these countries is essential both in terms of financial resources and of institutional expertise. The measures that should be undertaken in this regard must ensure the maximization of the benefits from and the minimization of the negative effects of trends in the world economy for all countries in particular for developing countries.

(ii) The end of the cold war and the developing countries

24. While the end of the cold war has fostered a new spirit of dialogue and cooperation at the global political level, there is a need to improve the international economic environment so that it is more conducive to the socio-economic development of developing countries, including through the fulfilment of commitments agreed to at the recent major United Nations conferences.

25. In the post cold war situation, the record of development is so far a mixed one. The successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round on multilateral trade negotiations, the consensus on development arising from recent major United Nations conferences and the expansion in private flows to developing countries are positive developments. On the other hand, the recent decline in real terms of ODA, the deterioration in terms of trade and the risk of marginalization from the world economy of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, are particular concerns. The international community and multilateral financial institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO) should focus their attention on ways to address these concerns effectively.

(e) Democracy, transparent and accountable governance, and the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development

26. The waning of ideological conflicts has improved the climate of cooperation at all levels. Although there is no universal prescription for successful development, a consensus has emerged, inter alia, that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework of our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. In this context, we reaffirm that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

27. Respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic and effective institutions, combating corruption, transparent, representative and accountable governance, popular participation, an independent judiciary, the rule of law and civil peace are among the indispensable foundations for development. At the same time, we reaffirm that the right to development is a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of human rights. As stated in the Declaration on the Right to Development, the human person is the central subject of development. Development facilitates the enjoyment of all human

rights, but the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights.

28. Efforts to reinforce democratic institutions and actions are vital for achieving peace and economic and social progress. Social stability, needed for productive growth, is nurtured by conditions in which people can readily express their will. For this, strong national institutions of participation are essential.

29. The existence of widespread absolute poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and renders democracy and popular participation fragile. It is unacceptable that absolute poverty, hunger and disease, lack of adequate shelter, illiteracy and hopelessness should be the lot of over one billion people. We commit ourselves to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world through decisive national actions and international cooperation as an ethical social, political and economic imperative of humankind.

30. Democracy, which is spreading everywhere, has raised development expectations everywhere. Lack of their fulfilment risks the rekindling of non-democratic forces. Structural reforms that do not take social realities into account could destabilize democratization processes as they exacerbate the reaching of that fulfilment. While it is recognized that States have the primary responsibility in securing a sound and stable national political, economic and social environment for development, international support, at the request of interested Governments, and the creation of a favourable international economic environment are crucial ingredients in this effort.

31. It is increasingly recognized that the State's role in development should be complemented by other relevant actors of the civil society, including the private sector. The State has the overall responsibility in various areas, including, inter alia, social, economic and environmental policy formulation, and for creating an enabling environment for the private sector; the State should encourage effective participation by the private sector and major groups in activities which complement and reinforce national objectives.

32. Every State has an inalienable right to choose its political, economic, social, and cultural systems, without interference in any form by another State. By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, all peoples have the right freely to determine, without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development, and every State has the duty to respect this right in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.

B. Objectives

1. Strengthening international cooperation for development

(a) Implementing all international agreements and commitments for development

33. The new opportunities, challenges and risks opened by the globalization and growing interdependence in the world economy, the critical situation and special problems in many developing countries and the special problems of economies in transition heighten the need for strengthened international cooperation. A strong political will is essential to sustain such cooperation. Through this

Agenda, we renew our commitment and seek to impart new vigour to a global partnership for development.

34. The international community has convened over the past five years or so a number of major conferences and meetings which have adopted decisions and made commitments on key development issues aimed at reinvigorating the development process and international cooperation for development. These include the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the World Summit for Children, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Cartagena Commitment, Agenda 21 and the various consensus agreements and conventions adopted before, at, or after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the Global Conference on Small Island Developing States, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the World Food Summit.

35. These conferences bear witness that the United Nations system is and should continue to be more actively involved in the full spectrum of development issues. The accords, commitments and internationally agreed targets reached at these conferences should be fully implemented by all States and international organizations. Only through full implementation can we give credence to the notion that these development initiatives are truly a priority issue for the international community.

36. Such implementation requires foremost political will by all actors at all levels. Too often the gap between what has been agreed and what has been implemented leaves much to be desired both at the national and international levels. The commitments we have made individually and collectively need to be fulfilled if the development needs of all countries, particularly of the developing countries, are to be addressed effectively.

37. To this end we reaffirm, through this Agenda for Development, the continued relevance of the agreements reached at these international conferences and other meetings of the United Nations and stress the need for an integrated, interrelated and coherent implementation and coordinated follow-up to these conferences.

(b) Enhancing the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system in development

38. As we approach the twenty-first century, it is the collective responsibility of the international community to ensure that within the multidimensional and integrated character of its mandate the United Nations system is equipped to show leadership in the fulfilment of the commitments made on international cooperation for development, and to serve as a forum for the expression of global goals and as an advocate for the promotion and protection of all human rights, including the right to development and the protection of the environment, as well as to respond to humanitarian assistance requirements and to maintain peace and international security.

39. The United Nations system, by virtue of its global reach, its universal membership, its impartiality and the unique and comprehensive mandate reflected in its Charter has a vital role to play in the development process. Enhancing this role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency requires a continuous focus on development issues and ensuring its sound financial basis.

40. The wide array of issues which the United Nations system addresses, is reflected in its various functions, such as those of the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and the regional commissions. Each part of the system has a specific role to play in addressing these issues. Relative strengths and weaknesses among the various parts of the system cannot be ignored. Enhancing the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system has to take these basic facts into account and programmes should be concentrated on areas where particular needs and the special capacity of the Organization converge.

41. However, overarching these considerations of efficiency and effectiveness of delivery, is the political dimension of the development agenda. The United Nations is unique because it conducts international political debates on all issues in the economic, social and related fields. These debates should provide political impetus to other fora to undertake the necessary policies and measures. Hence, the United Nations political interaction not only with Member States, the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and the regional commissions, as well as with organizations such as the World Trade Organization, but also with non-state actors should be intensified with a view to enhancing effective action and coordination among them in the economic, social and related fields.

42. This Agenda for Development sets out a new framework for international cooperation, defines the role of the United Nations, and how both can make a particular contribution, and sets out the development priorities as well as time-frames for implementation and keeps the implementation of the development agenda under political review.

2. Promoting development based on an integrated approach

43. Sustained economic growth is essential for expanding the resource base for development and hence, for economic, technical and social transformation. It generates the required financial, physical, human and technological resources. It is also essential to the eradication of poverty. An open and equitable framework for trade, investment and technology transfer, as well as enhanced cooperation in the management of a globalized world economy and in the formulation and implementation of macroeconomic policies, are critical for the promotion of growth and development. While the private sector is a motor for economic growth, the government has an active and essential role in the formulation of economic, social and environmental policies.

44. In order to ensure an integrated approach to development centred on human beings and to achieve sustainable development, economic growth on its own is not sufficient and environmental protection cannot be considered in isolation from the development process. The goal of development is the improvement of human well-being and the quality of life. This involves the eradication of poverty, the fulfilment of the basic needs of all people and the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development. It requires that Governments apply active social and environmental policies, and

the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of democratic and widely participatory institutions.

45. Investments in health, education and training are particularly critical in the development of human resources and should be pursued in such a way that everyone, both women and men, are given an equal opportunity to participate actively and productively in the development process. The improvement of the role and status of women, including their empowerment, is central to all efforts to achieve sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions. Diversion of resources away from social priorities and needs should be avoided and, where it has occurred, be corrected. Basic social programmes and expenditures, in particular those affecting people living in poverty and the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of society, should be protected from budget reductions. When formulating and implementing structural adjustment policies and programmes such considerations should be taken into account.

46. Development is and should be centred on human beings. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework of efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. As the well-being of human beings depends on all facets of development, a multidimensional approach to development is essential. Therefore, any formulation of strategies, policies, and national, subregional, regional and international actions has to be based on an integrated and comprehensive approach. It is in this spirit that we frame this Agenda for Development. All of the areas identified for action are closely interrelated for implementation of this Agenda.
